

Nunes defends right to ride with bill



Rep. Devin Nunes joined a Valley colleague today to introduce the Right to Ride Livestock on Federal Land Act.

Mr. Nunes and Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa, said the bill preserves and facilitates the continued recreational use of pack and saddle stock animals on National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wild-

life Service and Forest Service lands.

"Livestock use on federal land has a long tradition in American culture," Mr. Radanovich said. "Riding livestock is a great way to explore and experience our federal lands, and must preserve our riding heritage. Unfortunately, livestock use is under fire from

national environmental fundraising organizations who seek to restrict access to federal lands."

The bill safeguards pack and saddle stock use as a natural way for visitors to enjoy federal lands. Families, scout and church groups, senior citizens and the disabled all use livestock to explore the backcountry.

"Our lands were first explored and established using

horses and mules, from President Teddy Roosevelt to Sierra Club founder John Muir," said Mr. Nunes, a member of House Committee on Resources. "People continue to enjoy our national treasures up close and personal today using pack and saddle stock. To restrict that use is to turn our backs on our heritage. I am happy to assist in introducing legislation aimed at preserving the historic and recreational use of pack and saddle stock on public lands."

Mr. Nunes is an original co-sponsor of the legislation.

Visalia attorney Richard Cochran helped craft the bill. He is the former chair of the state Public Lands Committee for the Backcountry Horsemen and the current chairman of the Wolverton Pack Station Committee.

"Government agencies don't always recognize stock users' right to use public land," Mr. Cochran said. "This legislation recognizes that historical use and works to safe guard it."

Nunes gives boost to vets, economic development

Lawmakers passed another round of appropriations that include funding requested by Rep. Devin Nunes for veterans, agriculture, the environment and the economy.

Among the local items in the latest spending bill were:

\$350,000 for the International Agri-Center in Tulare. The funds, along with matching amounts, will help equip the Heritage Complex Learning Center and complete construction of a new 20,000 square foot exhibit

pavilion.

\$1.5 million to complete phase two of the International Center for Water Technology (ICWT) at California State University, Fresno.

\$500,000 in Economic Development Initiative funds for the City of Fresno to construct a five mile water conveyance pipeline to a surface water treatment plant.

\$200,000 in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds for the Operation Clean Air (OCA) public education and awareness

campaign.

While the spending plan added \$1.4 billion for veterans for a total of \$27.2 billion, that budget amount does not include discretionary funds for individual congressional districts.

"We owe our veterans a debt we can never repay," Mr. Nunes said. "They deserve the best care we can give them within our means. I am happy to vote in favor of giving them better care."